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an Elegy for middle america

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an Elegy for middle america

—emiliano gomez

Author's Note:

Middle America is not a place—it's what happens when dreams meet reality, and reality doesn't give or budge, so dreams shift. Typically, this is the result of family or culture; and when this is the consequence of Family there is warmth, there is hearth; when this is the consequence of culture, there is a gray area.

I've known a lot of Middle Americans, and I've met them in Marysville, and I've met in Los Angeles, I've met them in the middle of the country and on the coasts, in other countries and my own home. I thought I would write about them, for them, for myself.

An infinity of hearth can be found in the Middle American, an infinity of Faith, an infinity of Defeat, and the solution is the Self, projecting through the Self.

—e

A comment on capitalization: throughout, capitalization may appear erratic; it's not: I have capitalized "representative" words and left all other words uncapitalized. If I (Emiliano Gomez) am referring to myself, I'll use "i" because that i is both me and the speaker of the poem; but the "i" may just be the speaker of the poem referring to theirself, too; but a capital "I" is the representative "I," representative of any individual who may choose to take that place. This capitalization becomes trickier in two places: if I, e.g., write "Long trip" this may mean that the trip was (i) anything but long, and should have been longer; (ii) in fact brief; (iii) the feeling of something taking a while, in a wholly representative way (i.e. potentially, what is long to you is not long to me). This becomes even more tricky in the use of "the Lord," where Lord remains capitalized even though I often use Lord to refer to the literal entity of the Catholic God. But because Lord is capitalized, and the Catholic-God is already a three-part representative Being, I do provide the space to interpret the Lord as you wish to interpret the concept of the Being or God. This paragraph does not abide by the rules of the poetry, and I have tried to use correct capitalization wherever possible.

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i. the Hearth

It's the sort of thing

that might

appear
to have no
value at all.

-Marilynne Robinson, *Gilead*

as well

the hearth
is
no noise.

the hearth
is
fresh food.

the hearth
is
eyes you know.

the hearth
is
to be seen.

the hearth
is
warm each day
more warm the next.

the hearth
is
Our God at home.

the hearth
is
and will be
worth it
as it was in the beginning.

the hearth
is
rest.

the hearth
is
life.

sonder

—that each random passerby—
—a life as vivid
and complex as

the realization—that each random passerby—
is living—a Life as vivid
and complex as—your own.

the individual

I have spent my life on a quest.
I did not know when it was done; then, I did.

to know is to gain.
I took aim at my eyes; sought to know my self.

I would shift.
I would think Why; would draw the map once more.

I came to be my self.
I woke one day; and that was it.

I sleep now.
I rest and see; more Join, the selves of this world, and I am glad.

**

on "the cycles" of those who do not become the individual

**

abortion

a hollow vacant land forced to be forgot—abandoned!—

by someone, at some point; In A Room—that is lost—its warmth,
a chemic erasure. gene-editing for a spanish-looking exotic—
meant to be; Out Of Our Control—controlled by nature.

barren land like life once! hearths and the only clear thought; hollow.

an unpaved midday

eyes like daybreak's cow—day! time! haste!—

never setting sun on the just-rising day—heavenly holler
by midday when The Air's Gone Thick; sight green and blue.
No metric can measure a hope once had—a moment unbeaten—

the Lord all old news, a clunk—unpaved—the path.

lost and never had a chance

what's up is down. life's confused—

greens are fire. reds feel blue.
there is no hearth to it. not here!
Little Jimmy learned to do Anything, be Anything.

he's blurred—down on the graph—erased.

★★

on "the cycles" of one who does

★★

a life well-lived

a Whole Thing from the start:

do you mean to change my life? then speak
with charm. and i will heed, lunge, pop, and spark;
on and on, *sans cesse pour être Soi—mais mine.*

i rest and look on, Grown; i Fade, in peace.

at five;

tv exposures—
render'm frightened
then'e feigns fright—
for fun;
'n makes his
face all squished—
to blurt a
big—
kabazoosh!

'n falls over

—still laughin!
askin everyone
round'm
if'ey felt it too—
'n some go
yes
'n some go no
'nd 'e says
again!
in case 'a
missed it—
kabazoosh!

and now.

slid

energy in—
the body

gotta
play it
read it—
work it out.

or toss.
'n turn
'n sob
'n throb

feel sorry

reflect
reject—
eyes tight all night and pout.

/jystərʌn/ my nose dry
'n red; 'n sleep 'n a sec.

now post-pout wake;
pas post-kabazooshergy—

crank in my shoulder!

the leaves fall || brown

oh what! do you want:

The Stranger Who Knows How to Ask Questions
or bliss i.e. worshipping—devils rather than nothing?

the hearth was Our Joy before, where
family would eat, father would greet; glee and united aches ambianced;
the long days! and absurdity! was well-worth.

oh when! did you lose—
yourself in the vast light;
nowhere! but in your eyes—

The Land was Ours From the first bullet
for life and liberty and the pursuit of Being—not hegel's, not market's, not lensed's,
not biased—You!—Quotidian.

*

encumbrances like fact—factoid
for you; the Beer for joy, the pack;

the vicarious living, obsessed—
yesterday like today, time paused, tears fall.

it's sad because it was never supposed to be
this way. not romantic or fatalistic or dreamed.

Leaves lie among Cigarette Butts, wishing
for a whirlwind to propel, wishing for wings to sustain.

but they are profligate, a part of nature's waste, so their wishes
perambulate up, fall. the Horror as their fumes rise, plume.

**

They have Their wants, never asked, were! so—are.
 unity corroborated grey skies—Their beauty;
 their profligate hopes—heartaches unremediable.

Fruit Vapor like a steam spa water heated
 by Their Butts; nixed, discretion.

institutions—called people—oppressing people; in spite of it—
 not—because of it—the leaves fall and brown

and cough in the fumes; squint through haze;
 internal sludge; privilege associated with ego—

hemingway! shotgunned but still! surviving;
 footless; thrown
 —not much—have!
 —use it.

a principled stance against the Gradual Decline of our society's will-to-intellect; my
 Christian Soul burns for retribution—All People Want is to be full; actualized; laugh! or
 a slow head nod!

but we must work and live and be crushed until! (retirement)

—the game (of it all)
 to believe that myth.

sombras idénticas || pura cultura

Morton's Steakhouse Quinceñera with white company.
Clean black room, black napkin

black-pant mariachi. joyous,
traditional *gritos*, a toothy grin—*Bravo!*—

finger-tapping to violin and trumpet.
quick-foot dances portraited bright-green;
forests. surprises Keep Coming—for the skinned visitor.

la gente que nunca se dejó—

the altruistic vicarious || Proud

the Transmitted attitude—of the father
Inhabits his progeny, Permeates Their Nature;
Guides their psyche; and Self-perception—

a Recidivist in the machine; Drowning in deception;
the preacher's preacher's preacher's preacher.

Without—personal beliefs Set Aside—the child Didn't Bother.

fifty-two-hundreds loop rd.
four:forty-seven pm

an anthill the sutter buttes

you are no *Mont Blanc* no Himalayas
 a regal cock traipsing; struts—jaunts
 eternal. migratory patterns and days'end
 divine—stages;

in you inhabits; Dillard's eight-hundred-twenty-five
 per private, unprejudiced square foot—
 the thirteen Cicada Years Of Top Soil of
 maturation and saturation; men came for Gold

Buttes—the cow pasteurizers, then fed
 sutter-yuba;
 the rural northern valley—the father's
 anthill; emotional—truncation.

an elegiac manifest of elegant, mimetic roots.

Gold Sox Stadium
seven:thirty pm || working-class

poinsettia shelves—a value flex, many blessed dollars
like The Neighbor's Favors—
extends generational hearth.

a do-what-you-can'ittude—in public—
leered at, jeered through; felt

—flood lit
a what-can-we-do'ittude—and Razors.

the backbone of america
so—generous, earnest—hardworking, of the (h)earth.

loma rica
six am to seven:forty-five am

you are so! beautiful
you gentle hues
you Cohabitation of last night and this morning
named daybreak—named—the present.

you are the resurrection

you are the Warm—Cross, the revitalized power-lines—
you are *les ombres des arbres*
the worn wood of homes impressionist-ically blurred
the Gliding—diligent beats of black birds
the rooster's crows the cicada's—Symphony

ii. the Part and the Whole

The Great Learning teaches—
to illustrate illustrious virtue; to renovate the people; and rest in the highest excellence.

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the empire,
first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States,
they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated
their persons.

Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectify their hearts. Wishing to rectify their
hearts,

they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts,
they first extended to the utmost their knowledge.

Their extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things.

Things being investigated, knowledge became complete.

Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere.

Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified.

Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated.

Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated.

Their families being rightly governed, their States were rightly governed.

Their states being rightly governed, the whole empire was made tranquil and happy.

...all must consider the cultivation of the person
the root.

—Confucius

la manière d'être typique

right in front of you and way off in the distance—
Highway-strewn Construction; balcony Comforting hopes.

forever nuisances—Flies *reincarnées*—

caution—over mountains; thru roads; Inside! Buildings;—
Powerlines!—barreling flames, burrowing Connectivity.

the Boulder and the Sand

i. the sand

endless rows of cemetery severely reduced
a Heavy Leaf Turned.

The Wind in the safety of the home. United
à curer la peine and endorse the harari-useless-class—

on verra—arms! crowd!

done and deject;
are The Sand—
are The Sand.

ii. on boulders never being Sand

on a morning on a beach on a Monday
fresh from the week fresh feeling from floor
to every side to every divot—the Sand looked round
and saw a boulder—against which the simplest breeze
boulder roared against which the harshest torrent
boulder firmed

(seeming) to only excel in adversity
to never relinquish control

sand spoke to sand and they admired him
that great wall great history great culture
kindred stone.

Sand awe-struck clumped together only to fall apart at the night's tide.
Sand going it alone squished by chance, so permanently detached—and calls—
it home, it lover, and with it feels together.

Sand dreaming of boulderness of touching the sky

of brilliance of origin, of *Petro*,
of inhabiting the impossible—for it alleviates and it hurts
it fills and it empties, so it helps and it isolates.

Sand crushed because sand can never be the boulder
how they are where they are what they are why they are—
don't know can hardly explain—
it's permanent.

could it Be

that middle americans—
in honesty—
asked
Can I Deal With These Sharp Ups
Hard Downs—
Or Accept
Basic Joys
Remain Planar—
and found—it—
Middle America;

pity—of the human state
weaker
expected
and—
placated

—by
The Standard of
everything in general
nothing in particular—

—an Open question to the sand

i thought about people as sparks in a campfire, over drinks || one-am backyard

Cyclically sporadic, lunging Faraway—
stomps over fine rocks;
clomped under cacophony.

—Hotdogs sizzling in Harmony
distracted from—the Cook who mocks
and leaves the buns burned—left astray.

dictum

That
 the human state is—empirically—a failed state;
 skill—observable and formidable; intimidating and stunning; ferocious and proud; but
 uniquely rare—is greatness;
 the natural inclination to this greatness—a nature inclination of all essence—ruling;
 we—the people, acknowledging and admitting, do not blame nor judge; as all,
 including those full, natural mimetic expressions; sometimes you, sometimes me,
 sometimes never—know this to be true and
 as such exist.

*

The human state surprises even itself—
 when it recaptures its essence; but which it typically ignores like a persistent winged
 bug; hotter than heat, ethereal and seemingly ephemeral—
 and is limitless.

**

Essence—the exponential existence—
 exciting and terrifying
 for any
 at any age
 as certainly as with any skill—

Tending-toward-greatness—i.e. the greatest skill
 being achieving greatness through the exponential existence—
 is a practice long given up
 by that Land of Milk and Honey,
 Middle America.

a town
eternally

lost.

property || the Fresh Methane dream

The necessity of I-Me-Mine has proven too unbearable:

All through the day—I me mine; I me mine; I me mine—
and all through the night—I me mine; I me mine; I me mine!

Life alone from day to night—through heights infrequent; thru somber and reflective
lows in tears and in stride—
neither the lonely man nor the declarers of loneliness afford avoiding whole
embracement of continuous lonely life, making lows nearly intolerable; highs
exhilarating spurts.

Modern embracement of the quotidian lonely man manifests itself	
emo punk rockers	hyper-successful, influential tech giants
avant-garde andgrunge	obsessors of things
transfigured against	enamored with a singular goal
a mainstream egotism into a happy rejection	screwed by interconnectedness
their lives bring glamour to the days	rooted into the computer
where endless	coding
becomes something	egoist
society embraces to connect and fill	the inevitable, indisputable necessities of
the I-Me-Mine world.	

*

Academics, researchers, home-parents, lawyers, surgeons, artists, aficionados!
contemporary loners—career- and ego-driven; bent on their own It-You relationship
thinkers and actors of and upon things—their happy alternative.

addicts displaced
by their surrounding—It-, self-driven world and disenchanted with their own abilities
within it—
they turn completely to the tears—of the I-Me-Mine world in an acknowledgment—
of the world of only self—unfortunate acceptance that thunderous, altering, glorious
highs preclude themselves—
now and forever.

**

Yet majority denounces the thought of I-Me-Mine as sole reality—forcing itself into
 interconnectivity—becoming a form of group addiction, non-believers, deniers,
 weeping through every share and exchange—emotionally open
 givers,
 desirers of reciprocation and affirmation—internally deprived, externally semi-satisfied,
 leeching mutually amongst cold, debilitating, non-forthcoming, dishonest majority;
 transferrers of equal emotion, lifeless to begin—
 and end with being unable to distinguish the water in which they breathe
 with the same in which they drown
 daily—in continuous, cyclical, self-affirming group behavior
 and—think!

The necessity of I-Me-Mine proves too unbearable.

Incomplete	embrace	enamoured
with the convenient	relegates majority to	diseased
hard life	worse than addicts	whom majority rejects
whom majority emulates	in social	configurations
		mieux cachées.

If unbeknownst
 then shamelessly
 but foolishly;

if cognizant
 then shameful
 but understandable,

for indeed
 the necessity of I-Me-Mine
 proves unbearable
 consistently and

will, too fickle—fleeting.

the dinner table at five:twenty-eight pm || cowardice

the father may Save his child,
a Trained Canine or a Flailer in a River—

dug out of a mudslide
earth borne them both
out of, but he needed
the right stuff; Gumption or Balls, Wisdom or Growth, Courage to not Quiver—

shoot straight and clear-eyed; or rear an Unsaved, a Befouled.

what is middle america?

it is a place made by people, people with the same loves. people who are complex but reducible. those places are people. those people are placed.

people, being part of nature, have the same goal as everything else in nature—to be themselves. (in line with aristotelian logic) the pebble has no purpose, and it has no means to achieve it if it did; the knife has a purpose, to cut things, and has means, namely sharpness and metal quality, etc.; the shirt aims to cover (brought down here and don't no one know why—but it be damned if it don't do its best at what it does); the titanboa—?—to be the best titanboa it can—how it must have felt when the hippo invaded and multiplied, unbothered—well but it surely felt nothing. the titanboa was itself, and it just so happened that in being itself it was the most dominant fauna in the biome. so then people, too, must simply be themselves, follow the seventy-thousand-year-old gut instinct of the *sapiens*. many! do everything but.

people are social animals, so they stick together. sticking together conflates to comfort. comfort is addictive, then addiction. this cloudy-eyed disposition! adored in social societies like latin america but rejected in go-west-america: the individual rules above all, and individuals with other individuals make something unique. but societies have no capacity for that. they replicate. they are themselves—and finish themselves.

the tree aspiring to grass under duress. the boulder dreaming itself broken into a million pieces, a little bit of itself for all the sand around to share. the broken serve neither themselves nor those whom this altruistic shattering was meant to serve. the same is to be said of people. great men are limited—family and culture; *a priori* hearth; (my mother was dying, and istuck around and never stopped regretting it, and who was to blame?—me!—the man who didn't have guts yet, who rejected that *sapien* instinct; it said, go!)—people want nothing more than to be themselves. societies want nothing more than to use people to their own benefit. the struggle continues.

some go off (tom). Some stick around (baker; adamson). for the ones who stayed: regret, a deathbed wish; j'aurais aimé à vivre plus; me hubiera gustado vivir más. For the ones who went off: .

a soft spot for people who stay. i get it; it's oft regrettable. know why they leave.

on the Eve
of his 55th,
not with contempt;
imploing Father:
Do more, before—
|| my Father

His float, not to swim
against the ebb but on the flow
where's known; and uncertain current below:
do you dare, to consume him—

Goldfish are not found, in salt
endure; in stages: hobby, in circles—

poor kids:
 eat sweets;
 have—Bad—
 Teeth
 || the Nonoutlier

as Expected as

fruit butterflying
 into cider

a tsunami in japan

the big one in california

a wanderluster, unlost Discovering

wheat mothing
 into domestic abuse

a fantasy I had last night
 everything I wanted worked out

the cold hearth, five-one-five i street || Unachieved

the navy blue paint—Chips.

palm trees—in a home-insecure park—

Paint—in a cookie jar

Saints at mass and behind a bar.

Oaks of internal fungi and Black Bark;

doritos, Lays, and fuckups calls Slips.

somnifuge

diphtheria which made its havoc already
spreads among caged infants and
mothers

today—imbued
in the skin—confused.
yesterday—battered
in the name of us—fear.
tomorrow—

governance—itself reducible
to bad-data algorithms that
don't blink once—machines;
can't breathe alongside.
with neither a tinfoil blanket
nor hygiene; nor cistern—full of water,
or liquor—just not lead.

mothers remember crocheting baby socks,
made by hand—with family around
a dinner table—skeins and skeins
and skeins and they become a ball

of rage—yells; a drying succulent of misery—
cries! ideating—off the fences;
exhaustion—somnia.

the american mindset

it All.

to have privacy;
rights,
—for Others

(at the onset) to have it All.

(and this accepted
as not possible) to have privacy;
to have basics—to have Sovereign rights,
to have Continuation—for Others

HAwh

h e y — a l e x a ,

w h a t ' s

h a p p i n e s s ?

up—
 at the asscrack of dawn:
 asleep—
 sometime in between
 || the Worker

looking in their eyes

fallen dim

last dawn

I am rended
 my heart full-y-rended

their hopes all gone,

accomplishments

replaced by sighs

tomorrows—that are today

are yesterday's—
 potential—for: change

lost meaning
 when it lost its range

the streets of the Valley.
Bump and—Blur
but—suffice
|| the Town

Their Hearts Failed First.
like Habit.
faint breaths on hospital beds;
comforted by Association—
Visible—Depleting.

This World is an expression,
a mimetic representation
of the People Around It.

They made the Roads
to Their Standards
—Just Good—Enough

Digests—beginning and End.

Walmart Pharmacy**ten:thirty-seven am to eleven:twenty am || lower working-class**

ingrained through im!-part-iality.

on medical—fine! Glasses;
dancing; as they—Walk:

with a limp, a hop;
respirating—Whirring walmart;
Well-worn dreams become—Traces

an elegy for middle america

around the lake—Off the Pond—
 who eat milkshakes, burgers, fish'n'chips; who Wholed, In Second.

to the friends who never moved—
 On The Life—Out The New; time's hearths; quiet streets;
 (Rolling Skates, cheap ones) minutiae as Experience—
 who work—who drive with unreliable Transit
 who Never—Honk—never Make excuses.

the Wedding of Temple or Gazebo
 who read the word—hark! ye Lo!

sparse—drivethrus, Favors, and,—Surprise

densely—white and sweated—backyard baseball
 —hallowly dog-Barked—with all.

The Only City—the City in Silhouette—myself a shadow—against—
 its brights concealed between california Palms and local Chaparral
 behind Guard dog and Sturdy brick
 with a how ya doing.

Softy povertifitti'd;
 was once a Runner-on-first, fitted.

Buchanan Street
eight pm || upper working-class

the sophisticated—cosmopolitan consistently under duress;
several sets of matching—portraits, calendars—glass

unkempt; and aspiring—to
the subject of the moral Lesson—in need of Extra Texture, real, Pigmented Hues

so Unexpected—similar; visceral; ejective;—
natural—wanting by Elective.

adamson and baker || pretty girls aspiring to assisant and wife

between stuffy three pm and stuffy five pm
 ants sneak through—the swamp cooler!—as if outside
 to eat california summer fruits, and i Empathize
 because strawberry pickers start at four am,
 my youngest sister walks four blocks to the bus at seven:seventeen am,
 my mom kisses me goodbye to tend to preschoolers at seven:fifty am,
 my dad drops off peaches and brown, brown bananas at two pm,
 my oldest sister slouches in to her microwave dinner at ten pm,

and we're all a little hungry but've learned to eat it.

small towns like this third-runner-up to sacramento—
 yes; sacramento, half-million at the crossing of two rivers
 no not san francisco or los angeles, is the capitol;
 not—thankfully susceptible to forest fires—
 like paradise, which donald called pleasure, both ironic—

susceptible to Satisfactory middle-class Aspirations: girls

who trade in 'o-three bmws for sleeker, shinier
 'o-nine bmws in two-thousand-nineteen, or
 an off-the-lot jeep to drive thirty miles into town
 daily, whose parents provided the alcohol during the-glory-days and
 who now attend low-tier christian universities, and only
 two kids a year break free from middle america, sometimes to la like me;

to ny or berkeley sometimes; in blood red blue moons to harvard like tom;
 and we all fear ever coming back because there's a bad taste or
 overwhelming love, pity, or empathy; that just makes us stay.

every time—i hear booming from past my closed
 window, for—every thing penetrates —the swamp cooler

—marysville, ca nine-five-nine-o-one

iii. the Lord

fuge;

tace;

et quiesce.

nightmares and nothing

the Lord woke me, a Gun to my head.

He asked—

What is a reflection?

What do you see my son?

—i see bark in the hands of an old(er) age
lain as blocks of doric columns.

—i see a branch more sphere than not
which through eyes, math and many hands
an arch was thought up, this arch here made.

—in the sculpt of a face, i see
genes, not one thing more.

—and in eyes, i see too much my Lord, too little, too.

too

at The Top Of The Hill, too
the jet fuel pours,

in the shade of the home
an *ombre* of white

where the birds glide
and do not Fly,

eye to eye with the pink puff
of day's end;

you will not find that Peace
that is No Noise.

It
You
Thou

a rock for—Concrete's sake
a Cash—Register—for Tummy's fool—
a capital Exchange and consumption.

a Me—who Speaks—to
a You—who was paying attention
when Me Spoke—to You.

the sunset—Hushing,
the peace—united
the silence—Quieting

the God Blessing—
the Serenity; continuing
the Idea persisted

what money could not buy

we have been struck dumb by our own ineloquences,
by our own incapacities, our own failures.

i want the happiness of the world but i do not
want it the way They want it.

so what's to pass? are people politico-economic units?
dustbowl Winds roar; my mind cascades into

—Disquiet—

americans process food, prefer grease and meat-forms to
what-money-could-not-buy.

in an igloo, i rejoice

you will not find solace outside; there is no solace there.

the fly on the flower knows its peace; not all roses
left at gates are picked up, even on the mid-Winter day of love.

the man sat down on the ice floor, in the ice house, and said,
oh Lord who is now, who hears me

i see not the Face, so i see it blur amongst the clear,

for All in me is still, so All is still.

hecho a mano

i. entre fuego—y Pastel

corrí con Rapidéz
que anticipé—no—

causé una Moción
que—Nunca—acabarrá.

supe Muchas Veces;
me dejé—continuar;
Y Nada; Ni nadie;
me hizo—

encerrado— Conviviendo
En Lumbres— Felizmente
tuve razón—No—pude Parar.

ii. maruchan mignon

Instant Quick Lunch—decomposing
like a stroll of soft Filet Mignon.

Pretending!—An uneven reflection;
shadow and Refracted reality. Stenciled

Symmetry; roses; white fences.

cat hun!ched—jaguar
prowling to flicker victims' eyes
shut. and unsuspecting, off-guard
Mice are bitter candy for the
natural-born—predator

Forced domestic, founded Part of deity.

iii. inconceivable ll american tacos

my sister says what matters is
The Impact
not the intention.

that's a thing
Called Empathy,

sweet and fulfilling
nearby and faraway

grandma's culture sausage
ergo
A Dream.

on Form and Function

two wheels and a bar of ore *au centre*;
why do we need the noise?

the moon wanes, with no use for words;
the birds are hum and trill, the songbook of ciphers.

all this! loud! *l'homme sans centre*
not sure of the sound.

the waves flap from the span of the bird god
 — *l'oiseau d'eau* —
whom does place our feet on the wheels,
brings us to the sea.

we do not need Protection

we do not like that Word.
we do not need that Word.

we need the best of the past
to stay.

we need the heart of the home
to pulse.

we need the love of mom
to care.

we need the care of dad
to hold.

we need the friend that grew up
with us.

we need this
that keeps us
near death and near life
— Faith —
and no more.

we need that Word.
we like that Word.

what is Happy?

the Lord is not—
happy —

He does not wish for you
to be—happy—

His sole wish for you is for you
to be—

full.

maternal reverence

mother, the radiant sponge with a million hands—
my clean skin on a fresh pillow
a good morning! wake-up! yell
with a kiss, a smoothie— and dinner assured,

the wind is scary— and i need to be held. by me,
illusory exceptionalism to maternal reverence. the lord
looks down and hopes for health, that you are
Doing Better—for that is what you came.

la vie

i. la sangre

a human varicose vein
 run dry—*mal*—
 lingers; a blemish—that longs
 within and alongside.

stowaway desires like
 chicken-eating-vomit
 like feeling a silence unenforced.

fulfilled hearth, but—
 they're people, (twelfth-century) nice; God.

the cows won't talk;
 the food the weather
 these frozen—savages—
 very manifest.

ii. l'air

on my open toes tonight.

harsh whispers between palpitations screeching probabilities; now,
 self-enclosed-congestion, *s'est enfermé*—a group; Multitudes.
œuvre ouverte; pour tout le monde, il faut en profiter:

orion and the big Guy overhead, a culture calm—
 the hedged abode synthesizing youth and timbre;
 conservative radicalism, curly hair, cranes,
 roebing Well-lit; restoring—restarting—
 myself; *le soleil*, strength gainst murky angels—

no more *sans*

cesse nighttime monsters, *qui s'appellent mes ténèbres*.

iii. du calme

this evening I jolted serenely still with blinding clarity:
that the world was lain to paradox Should Be no surprise.
crisp bird trills and rolling engines harmonize; guitar melody

of napa and bordeaux; of abode, flaming generation, and fibonacci;
of raising four-legs to two, *fière* on three; blind fecundity —
for billions of years for genius and grammar and collaboration in one; Man—

in a cobblestoned zacatecas breaking corn with oaxacan beggars,
simplicity envelops contentment; this hot street tamal
her small-town hope, expending the luxury of kindness.

poverty, a Profligate beauty, an appreciation for Pennies.

iv. the self

"Your fathers did

eat manna
in the wilderness

and are dead."

— John 6:49

you!—always remember

i believe in people
they're limitless.

it's societies that're limiting.
i contend with'em.

them only.
but from which came which?

thinkers—people

a prelude:

thoughts consume
and inhibit.
do; say; act now.

how many times
will you moan
the same thing?

let the past lie in lines.

thoughts and persons:

I think about
meeting jeff in french where he was
for the only time I can remember
a person not sprinting towards the next grab or capital haul
not searching and intent
hoping to beat out the next guy
for that next big idea.

I think about
calvin's endless religiosity
how logic can start and end with god
grasping
that logic often starts and ends in dogma.

I think about
the softness
of teal
the seriousness!
of navy.

I think
my breath allows
my *corps* to fall
in place.

I think about
how to live a full life.

I think
Creatives who call themselves Creatives
need to remind themselves it's Creatives affirming their Creativity
and not even the person part of Creative
which is the world.

I think about
 how to analyze the quantity of college kids—right now
 high on a couch
 either philosophizing
 an all-too simple question
 or
 dreading an assignment.

I think about people thinking about the same thing I am thinking about
 what I'm thinking about and if that's reassuring or peculiarly intrusive.

I think about yolanda's cooking and how dad's was supposedly better
 but had it been he would have cooked more.

I think I can't believe I didn't mention DisneyWorld
 lying awake in bed.

I think about the subtle soft power of women how a hundred generations of male
 aggression—conniving and witchcraft; cunning and bossiness—all the same.

I think about what leaves me in awe
 what makes me go awe.

I think about i remember, joe branard.

I think about horoscopes, microscopes
 and how the lord'll make us all free.

I think about
 salsa
 the dip for your hips
 salsa
 the dip for your chips.

I think about numbers higher than one-hundred
 how many there are—concretized and distinct—
 ubiquitous.

I think about the endless American market
 the somewhere between one-hundred and ten-thousand wine bottles, pasta options.

I think about
 (blank)
 Elena The Ralph's Cashier
 (grocer)
 has been In The Trade for thirty years
 how that can't be an innate disposition
 how her life's Worth
 could never be expressed In Career
 nor could this black guard's—listening to rap out loud
 jacked into the youtube economy— and thankfully
 ralph's's twenty-four hours
 which
 he just answered with an exasperated hand,
 so he'll get a thing or two before back to the car
 another way corporations and their oppressed(?) employees
 fund each other
 nor could that hard soft skin and autumnal hairline
 have ever hoped for candidness and she knew
 before powell lied
 before these strikes
 and since—
 felt it when two people in the sixties died
 as publicly as possible and the us of a cheered so good.

I think about
 greed
 and
 lack
 and
 luck
 and
 greenery
 and
 stupid! bullshit
 like every other college student.

I think about
 how many things if done without music
 would be terribly boring.

I think about
 South Park the iconic American sitcom series going on season twenty-two now
 that's been as ballsy as a nine/eleven episode
 within a month of september and bin laden made garbling sounds
 and there were afghani cartman and american cartman...kyle stan afghani kenny
 and american kenny.
 ginger cow
 specifically
 which is banned on netflix france and before you ask hulu streams it stateside.
 The main plot is
 a spiteful acquaintance for no particularity other than personal insecurities
 paints a regular cow
 into an orange and white afro'd ginger cow
 which in itself is terribly dull but in doing this
 he resolves all abrahamic religions and brings peace on earth.

I think about
 the moment of space two bodies in doggy style take up
 like hallowing bathrooms—extended half-baths;
 how in just a little more space
 a handstand would! be! reasonable!

I think about
 how this week just bled together
 not as a gush
 and not tiringly
 not as if spent in the modern-day—ufc-coliseum
 not with immense pressure—physical weight
 crunching my support
 from my pelvis to my shoulders

I think about
 how I judge intelligence from language
 because I judge my self that way
 how many other people I've judged
 were made into something far-reduced.

I think about
 two admirers

one from friends
 that to be normal average like everybody else is—the greatest aspiration
 whether we should still be friends.

I think about
 the repercussions of thinking of sex as means for multiplying the species
 masculinizing primogenitor
 and continuing the self as a responsible ^ social requirement.

I think of
 Carly Simon
 and just who the Hell is so vain.

I think about
 warren and buttigieg
 harris the cultureless black woman banking and barking on racial appeal—
 so to counter her narrative
 I've been loudly announcing in crowded areas,
 daily,
Kamala Harris is a Racist
 to whoever doesn't have earbuds in.

I think about
 dark chocolate
 and pineapple
 two percent greek yogurt
 apples cashews
 and a drizzle of bruin gold honey.

I think about
 a phish and scam lab in Africa
 from where chase gets two or three calls a day;
 and it was tricky from the start
 there was no excuse.
 just should've been smarter.
 all those calls—
 Americans; fifty-percent
 can't afford an unexpected bill
 of four-
 hundred dollars.

I think about
 how my head would feel
 over my heels where it's
 always supposed to be.

I think about
 what this name means
 that it's a love bitter to my home
 that the home to so many people like me who ate pop-tarts because they were good
 cheap in style who shopped at jcpenny's
 which is selling second-hand soon
 likely is by the time you've started reading this
 and called it penny's at target and pronounced it tar-jay
 cried because there's another hungry mouth to feed
 that it's hard—
 and that's a fact—
 and the middle means plateau
 because it's the place people go
 and up or stay
 because they've plateau'd
 which is a tragedy but true and relatable
 which is why it's a tragedy
 because only a truth can be tragedy
 is how's the reality go to be? but blatantly disregarding or perfectly glad
 full of the Spirit of the world
 anywhere resplendent
 spirits that need somewhere to rest and spread warmth
 and choose the land of warm souls
 kin who are not kin born
 of sin and get brighter as if unburdened
 because they're unburdened.

I think about
 moments where I refused to capitulate
 how out of place they feel
 how proud they make me—
 bubble convictions.

I think about

how disturbingly
a girl last night talked about her casual drug use
with phrases of never-ending love and
Can't Ever Say No.

I think about
efficiency
how for so many it's priority One.

I think about
my roommate
how silly he is
how he flips a bird every time he sees me.

I think
I am rooted;
grounded; safe;
fully at home anywhere on this; O.K.

I think
I just saw a ship,
maybe seventeenth century, maybe fifteenth,
the length of two colonial invasions,
exigences of New Worlds,
but it was just the puddle and some trapped refracted light.

I think
Black Swan tells the tragedy of perfection
when sought by the frail
and weak
for whom perfection comes at a cost.

I think about
the confusion that feels identical
to falling to shame
incidentally
due to less life experience. due to more, too.

I think about
how funny cock and balls—carved into the original concrete

sharpie'd onto a passed-out forehead
 finger-painted onto a clean-me-dirty rearview
 window spray-painted anywhere—
 until within willed arms length
 at which point they're immediately uncomfortable absurdly repulsive.

I think about
 how regulating food intake
 is also regulating bathroom visits
 how that's motivation enough
 to do so.

I think about
 how Psalms sounds like Sobs.

I think
 I'll develop some convictions
 about classism
 then question them
me demander contre eux
voir si j'en denoue.

I think about
 the knockoff brockton avenue that dead-ends into ross,
 a multi-story parking garage its immediate adjacent.

I think about spirits and causes:
 the crane and its roar
 of limitlessness, the yellow and black stained streets
 of the u.s. of history and today, the wind's onset of this SDF (*sans domicile fixée*)
 and her pleasant grit;
 ucla health's westwood tower
 and loud reminders;
 an adolescent in university-years, world at one-hundred
 going on one-hundred-one.
 Palm Trees and its din—tumult and cornucopia
 of green; a declaration to breathe and climb; poverty and its hard bargain;
 dead to be best or free; worse than the baby blue-breasted booby.
 crime and its and desperation—that smells like soft-baked apple pie
 in a fame; a swamp of rotten fruit and fish;

gone sour *sans* special occasion. jackfruit tamales
 and obsessive climate-friendly alternatives,
 chain restaurants and their fantasy of small-time goes big time,
 Trader Joe's and a happier grocery-shopping experience,
 French and its literality,
 sniffles and their non-contractive distance,
 public transit and the gift of sharing;
 specialization and the innate pull towards passion.

I think about
 Matt and I
 beer pong
 and how pajamas are socially acceptable.

I think about
 indiscretion
 and good friends.

I think about
 the difficulty over-fifties have with basic technology,
 how a competition entitled *are you more competent than an eight-year-old*
 would show the grotesque:
 a texting challenge using thumbs only
 maybe give the child near-sighted impairment glasses for the boomer's benefit.

I think about wealth and race
 how the latter precedes the former
 in hale county, compton, l.a.u.s.d., south china—
 (think being black in america is hard? try being not han chinese in china)—
 the bronx, indigenous Mexico; reserves usa.

I think about
 doors
 how much they say about the place—
 mountain town Andalucía with a light, frayed Blanket
 where a knob *should* be;

I think about

the minutiae
 property inherent in saneness
 how it's what it really sounds like five times fast
 sameness
 how that a nasal sound is the most common cross-linguistically,
 how the most cosmopolitan american
 sounds like a redneck
 —chinese—native of eastern tennessee
 to a liverpool pub crawler.
 the danger of mimesis: that learning is experiencing
 permitted as the basis, it's a happy accident
 a prominent, popular president didn't take up consuming urban squirrel
 as the alternative to free shots
 as we could have become poets and used opioids recreationally
 and crowd-funded the amazon
 be on the moon or mars or far away
 but instead we're classists
 without a clue
 and cancer, a clue on tomorrow's tomorrow;
 how investment bankers had role models;
 how streets porto-o-toilet whores have themselves;
 how every word is a representation—an attempt and nothing more—
 to get at the truth of something—its five senses—
 and how fickle that is,
 how the most powerful thing since gettysburg and jesus
 always got the truth, and authority from truth.

I think about
 our innate desire
 for recognition and perfection,
 the consequences of achieving great heights,
 a goal and its incongruous host,
 a dream, its realization, (black swan), our disaster,
 how the mighty have fallen, still fell, and will fall,
 how the weak remained, remain, and shall remain;
 how we define David,
 Goliath, books by covers, (other mixed metaphors),
 who made the team, who didn't
 why that at then made them now, makes them now, and will make them

I think about
my immune system.

I think
and having so
have argued that.

I think about
my childlike enthusiasm,
which is the opposite of naiveté.

I think about
the syntax of my neighborhood, the city, my state,
and the logos of the world.

a collection of individuals || people

a person

the look of the word—the feel of the line.

how did my sister look when classmates—
 one with the last name gusto;
 in spanish Pleasure
 ran
 up to her; handed her
 a used tin can—clear-taped on
 was a paper that read POOR.

Hare Krishna, Krishna Hare—
 mantras: I'll—get through
 this—It—gets
 better—Lord—know
 why; Why?
 Lord, why?—
 Just—another microaggressions—
 so; I'll—show'em; We're not
 alone—One day—at a time; fear
 is stupid—what works for you may not work for me!

Einstein Holding The Atom—ginsbery preaching howl;
 blacks on segregated counters and the backs of their heads
 saddened scowls; Natives getting their braids sheared;
 elvis grooving out return to sender; service-members
 who are the flag who defend Principle on principle;

leaders strategizing over a map—Women Welding—
 a child playing with food and the mother comes over
 to find what's written, to find peas'n'mashed potatoes and a
 big hunk of nothing and the child—squeals—boom!

to have grown up—alongside my mother! and father!—
 have been their unselfish counsel—in tough times—
 reminded! them; been omniscient; made—dream their
 fifty-year-old self dancing to their five-year-old self; crying
 in a pillow—at their eldest daughter's wedding.

the look of the word—the feel of the line.

pretend not to stare into lawnmowers'
 camrys'peach trees' and landscaping projects'
 eyes (such that)

my Brown Eyes water
 staring back into eyes
 like my uncles' my aunts'
 my figurative and literal kins'
 category Hispanics' eyes
 —color Brown.
 touch their soul or mine
 smile of sincerity that speaks
 We're not alone
 We'll get
 through this.

worry...
 pariah—ears deaf
 hate me—circumstantial privilege
 think I hate them too—
 que! no puedo entender
 tears—dishonest and selfish
 cry—rarely.

the look of the word—the feel of the line.

the appeal of a tribe

what high school called a click
 chosen by the time the snap's
 rung and died out.

diversity of thought—but tomi lahren
 bill clinton—the blackest president
 metrics for racism—Can I Touch Your Hair?
 ignorance or internal biases—racists anonymous;
 the bay area—ubiquitous as a.a.;
 scarce—privately-owned water in the Central Valley.

dream lessons learned in sixth grade
 tweenhood
 remain and manifest healthily.
 division giving way to
 colloquialnesses; competitions
 warriors lakers giants dodgers
 like Snoopy Dogg
 and Charlie Brown.

joanne's fabric small talk—em-dee-twenty-twenties;
 four locos; because everybody's Drank before—
 avoiding politics like automated vehicles—
 if we're computers and call socially-made
 neural network—teaching or elderly wisdom.
 opt in for grainy white—not chiffon
 the opposite of what's needed.

a good universe with children running, snuggling back in bed,
 blankets with cartoon monkeys, rubber duckies in soft-scene bubbles,
 red-fox-like-corgies, elephants sat up like teddy bears, believing
 in truths of courage and honor, cities built around people.
 the look of the word—the feel of the line.

—fifteen august two-thousand-nineteen

a person

boss bitch, fly! julissa gómez de nadie, Por Nadie.

the next chapter in my life—right now—i wonder i would like to spend it—what
thrift! to use; energy! to save to preserve—expend. hear! the decade-old cooler—
whirling a bedlam of dust bleating in— the Rural Northern Valley.

see drug-afflicted toddlers! who—yes have shit on My school-floor to be fair—all!
of them went—through a month-long phase— drinking toilet water. Run away
—want!—Be far away from everyone.

boss bitch, fly! julissa gómez de nadie, Por Nadie.

pretend—Attitude isn't a construct chastised; at'd; glared through. on shrill the fat
girl (or whatever) yells at her male boss and he says "you're a bitch!" with a
cackling smile, and the fat girl says "what—no?—i'm not."—defensive— receives
a raise! feel—need—Be Assertive Be Assertive! the bags in my hands; Two
People stood up and left. and the bus pushes us— into friendly proximity, and—
we're off. worry... i'm doing what i said i'd do; mom— been here once.
cry tonight because it worked out cry tonight because it didn't the next steps are
Closer—the figs!

boss bitch, fly! julissa gómez de nadie, Por Nadie.

understand cultural methods; anime and manga—a message; the Main Character
—raised by a ghoul— Emotional processing reduced—socializing Empty. how
do i eliminate these fears? coworkers who love alongside me —dream—choosing
five to nine we care—The Purpose—we love try! focus! medium; meditate;
time and energy—into learn to live this way. long ago liberated the oysters shine
bright in my ceviche Peruano at this table— I like— where four-thousand-five-
hundred-fifty miles— it's a cloudy ten:sharp pm night— tomorrow exciting again.

boss bitch, fly! julissa gómez de nadie, Por Nadie.

—thirteen September two-thousand-nineteen. departed now four days. in Peru two
days. birthday in four more.

a person

glad! immigrant—gracious; Son.

how many
eat Subway
how there are
so many.

la la land—emma stone; “Here’s to the mess! we made!” Echo Park—purple and blue.

a beautiful black girl—z hands-full mother. a perfect complexion black adolescent
outside; head toweled elaborately; literally tweaking. She just got There.

want—to inhabit a place full of suppositions, somewhere between
San Francisco and—Barcelona.
feel—swooning tourists; adoration;
friends; zip code fresh—recogniz!able

glad immigrant—gracious; Son.

pretend! interest—to increase Chance of learning—Something.

feel natural kinks—spunk; black child in cute, classic double bun updo; grandmother
—z impatience, hair thinning, thinner than fifty years of relaxer might let on.

touch of the seven/eleven
against the starbucks— backside; on Wilshire;— that looks just like the kwik-e-mart;
wondering was that Racist Adjacent

worry...
smiles and sentiment will be enough
for eternity—ying-yang;
satisfied life—interminable joy—
frustration

cry in feeling the touch of the lord!

glad! immigrant—gracious; Son

bus-going angelenos in sweats from Ross Gucci
 JCPenney Levis—no matter—will pay for the bus
 dutifully—respectfully! prudent like giving to a friend going through tough times.

say
 america means diversity
 china means world-domination.

dream my first time was with Maddie and instead of steamy, mind-blowing—
 how—it was meant to be.

try to think of how to explain class privilege
 Without
 Dripping (with) poverty.

hope for Long life—back aches, adventures, Humdrum, slows and breaknecks,
 moments for Unanticipated Pride.

glad!—immigrant; gracious; Son!

—six august two-thousand-nineteen
 LA, Westwood, Metro 720 Rapid, Greyhound

on Andrew Yang

he talks about Truck Drivers
but what he's talking about is
emotional processing
and the male incapacity for it.

men are providers and proprietors
if you ask
simone de beauvoir
or adam smith.

when they can't be either
they get a noose their nape,
instead of a smack shame.

when the japanese elderly and forgot
aren't found weeks late—
wreaking reminders!

he talks about
old age; it isn't ready for
stress, like high stakes, and money and the future.

when men do
finally realize there's no other option,
djt loses because
all the cheap labor is gone and
made of somewhere else's steel parts
by the educated and prepared, the people who'll see it coming.

a person

reconciling. Coming To Terms.

if the Word of the Lord will soon rest uneasy for
Those harboring—historical anti-sentiment;

calm all around, snuggle with it—
let it whisper and advise;

Save your strength.
It will get harder Son.

Little League—kids joyous
unencumbered joints or thoughts pure.

see familiarity.—want so desperately to give myself up—to World—but! born
Cartesian doubt.

reconciling. Coming To Terms. disdain for my people and culture—
lengthy stays; throes of counter-culture; disdain appears Justified, like my knee's fling

Upwards after the tiny hammer—hits. affection for fellow Man—
desire for Women. touch; pray; both on the Sabbath.

reconciling. Coming To Terms.

worry... Smokey the Bear will burn with Redwoods— and a tv in some forgotten
classroom—an SOS ad on repeat—*Only you can stop forest fires*—echo quietly.

cry—try to—emotions rush leave my skin flushed
Glory! my eyes watery!

some people are talkers others are not! talkers can't let not-talkers lead forced
conversation of the weather; Tarantino movie; strangely personal epics—

say! damnit! don't—google
what Color Are My Shoelaces?

dream a conscious awakening
a universal awareness of happiness.

Reconciling. coming to terms.

—eight august two-thousand-nineteen

a person

birthday boy—unlicenesed Processor—of my dreams

where the cars park at twilight and at dawn if that's an everyday occurrence. perfectly fine. the human static against the oak tree's yawn and rustle. myself five ten and twenty years from now. able—a handstand—a walk—a cartwheel on a balance beam—another trick or—two. pretend, as we all Do On Birthdays—that— everything is not brighter; people are not kinder; love is not fuller; sisters would not call in sick to make your day yours; it's true. Still as a pinhead point on a paramount tv Gone Grey. birthday boy—unlicenesed Processor— that phrase, “—no longer,” —big occasion; feigning stout; the conviction—that— solution—not—going out more; reading and hearing less— picking up her interests or getting a cute puppy. worry... diligent poets thought engagers in animal-loving, academic pressure, quotidien habit, lines, start words and ends words. cry—try to—anyway. working on it. say The full soul loatheth an honeycomb; but for the hungry soul everything bitter is sweet. uncertain swells; recedes *mauvaises amis* and reads *littérature anticonformiste* contrarianism drinks a morning smoothie six months—today included—devours quadruple-stacked peanut butter sandwiches lathered on both sides. dream lost children—horrifying ineptitude not Finding them. my cow town flooding; a map out; who can read but dyslexic; child—faultless and So!—radiant. mockingbirds start spring early to sing. old things—again and! again—to make sure they Still dissatisfy me. results unsurprising. hope for every man, woman, child to see the glory of Health the Luxury of family, warmth, comfort, and mutual adoration.

birthday boy—unlicenesed Processor—of my dreams

—my birthday

a person

am a Handstanding—Cartwheeling—inflexible—progressing

language is reality—
Talking to itself
about itself

—ffff—k—hhhh (hand Swam across paper;
pen—no tip jams wooden table;
nose in front—inhales)

lauded Carcas—or despised—Or Both.
want(ed)—to live along the River
where the Honey Runs.

pretend People-in-theory
are more appealing than -in-person

love—the when-harry-met-sally kind.

Paper-Thin Trees

worry...
kindness —will—
One Day evaporate;
not just from Me—but everybody.

cry—young ones die!
three days ago—El Paso
a week since Gilroy—where Madrina lives—
and i didn't check in. Cruel

—progressing

the nietzschean—!ord don't let it be true—
say Give—do not

Sacrifice.

dream—MLK—a one-seventy-eight—
Honey—the Love
of My Life.

try! a lot!

hope! Smile! to passerbys
lighten their burdens—if—
for a Second

—progressing.

around the lake, off the pond—
once—was a runner on first.